

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 BEIRUT 00249 161221Z
ACTION SS-25

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FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
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AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

S E C R E T BEIRUT 0249

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PBOR LE
SUBJ: SOUTH LEBANON: CONVERSATION WITH PRESIDENT SARKIS

1. IN JANUARY 14 DISCUSSION PRESIDENT SARKIS SAID SITUATION IN SOUTH LEBANON WAS RELATIVELY CALM AND HE HOPED IT WOULD STAY THAT WAY. I SAID ISRAELIS EVIDENTLY HAD NO INTEREST IN STIRRING THINGS UP AND WANTED KEEP IT QUIET. REJECTIONIST PALESTINIANS WERE ANOTHER MATTER, HOWEVER. THEY COULD VERY EASILY START SOMETHING. PRESIDENT SAID HE REALIZED THIS, BUT HAD IMPRESSION EVEN PALESTINIANS WANTED TO KEEP IT QUIET FOR TIME BEING. THEY WERE NOT ANXIOUS TO EXPOSE THEMSELVES TO ISRAELI ATTACK.

2. I NOTED THAT CAMILLE CHAMOUN HAD SPOKEN TO ME AT LENGTH THE DAY BEFORE ABOUT THE QUANTITIES OF ARMS BEING SHIPPED INTO SOUTH LEBANON THROUGH THE PORT OF TYRE. CHAMOUN HAD SAID IT WAS VERY DISTURBING. PRESIDENT SAID REPORTS HAD BEEN CONFIRMED TO HIM BY DIRECTOR OF SURETE, WHOSE PEOPLE HAD BEEN COUNTING CRATES. THE QUANTITY COMING IN--ARTILLERY, MISSILES, AND OTHER ITEMS--WAS VERY LARGE.

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HE GATHERED PALESTINIANS WERE UTILIZING CURRENT QUIET SPELL TO REARM SELVES AND STOCK SUPPLIES BECAUSE THEY KNEW ISRAELIS COULD SHUT OFF FLOW THROUGH TYRE VERY EASILY AT ANY TIME.

3. COMMENT: CONTINUED LACK OF ISRAELI ACTION TO BLOCK FLOW OF ARMS THROUGH TYRE REMAINS A PUZZLE TO LEBANESE.

4. ABOVE WAS DRAFTED BEFORE I SAW WEEKEND'S REPORTS OF
RENEWED VIOLENCE IN SOUTH. IT INDICATIVE OF STATE OF
LEBANESE INTELLIGENCE DISSEMINATION THAT SARKIS ALSO
APPARENTLY DID NOT KNOW ABOUT THEM.
PARKER

SECRET

NNN

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